

Mid-term NARRATIVE REPORT

- This report must be completed and signed by the person responsible for the project and counter-signed by the legal representative of the contractor who has signed the contract with the European Commission.
- The information provided below must correspond to the financial information that appears in the final financial report.
- Please complete the report using a typewriter or computer (if you have an e-mail address, this model can be sent to you electronically, if you send a written request to this effect).
- Please expand the paragraphs as necessary.
- The European Commission reserves the right to reject any incomplete or badly completed reports.

1. Name of contractor and of her/his legal representative:

EKO LIBURNIA, Association for development of ecotourism, organic agriculture and environmental protection

Ranko Tadic, President

2. Name and title of the person responsible for the project:

Ranko Tadic, Project Manager

3. Title of the project:

SUCCESS – SUPPORT TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

4. Reference number of the project:

Contract No 101366

5. Start date of the project:

1st May 2005

6. End date of the project:

31st October 2006

7. Country (ies) in which the project took place:

Croatia, Primorsko-Goranska County.

A. Contractual Compliance

1. Has the project been carried out as foreseen in the contract? If not, please explain how and why the original proposal was modified, including the dates that any addenda were requested and received.

In general Project has been carried out as foreseen in the contract with delay in implementation of some of its activities due to several reasons:

(i) Holding of regional and local elections in Croatia in May 2005 caused change in most of the towns/municipalities governments within Primorsko-Goranska County (PGC) and constitution of the new assemblies and executive bodies took several months.

(ii) First instalment of EU funds for the Project was received with seven months delay.

(iii) Project region towns/municipalities initially have shown weak response to Project implementation, especially in its co-financing.

During the first project year it was planned to carry out **four preparation** and **eight execution activities**. All four **preparation activities** were carried out, three as planned (kick-off meeting; preparation of the Project database; development of Aarhus Convention workshops' curricula), while contact/inquiry in 35 towns/municipalities was implemented with delay due to the above mentioned reasons.

Concerning eight **execution activities**, five were carried out as planned (preparation and publishing of three issues of the Project bulletin titled "SOVA"; holding of regional Aarhus Convention workshop; selection of participating towns/municipalities) while two have started with implementation. Local Aarhus Convention workshops were carried out in two out of six towns/municipalities (completed 40% as planned) during the first project year. The remaining four workshops, as well as preparation and publishing of the fourth issue of SOVA bulletin is moved forward to the second Project year.

The only real problem is envisaged selection of six Project info-points for the Project follow up. Contacts with Project area towns/municipalities have shown that neither one of them is interested in establishment of SUCCESS info-point since selection criteria was based on town/municipality willingness to provide premises and utilities for the info-point, as well as the adequate person for the info-point co-ordinator job without any financial back-up from the Project.

At the same time, six similar info-points are to be established beginning of 2007 as part of the complementary EU CARDS project REGINA implementation. Towns/municipalities' arguments were that it would be too much to establish additional six SUCCESS info-points, especially taking into account that Eko Liburnia is implementing both projects. Furthermore, in approved SUCCESS project proposal it was clearly stated that SUCCESS is directly linked to the complementary project REGINA in which Eko Liburnia is partner to the Regional Development Agency PORIN.

After consultation with REGINA project partner PORIN, Eko Liburnia decided to accept quite reasonable arguments of towns/municipalities and merge SUCCESS and REGINA info-points into one which is providing two different kinds of services to beneficiaries. This decision, however, means that implementation of SUCCESS project must be seven-eight months prolonged pending establishment of REGINA info-points in 2007.

To conclude, for project SUCCESS success **it is necessary to extend duration of the project for seven additional months, i.e. until 31st May 2007.** For that reason Eko Liburnia is requesting approval from the Commission to do so without any changes in Project approved budget.

2. Was the provisional budget of the project respected? If not, please explain any changes that occurred.

Provisional budget of the Project was generally respected with some delays in payments due to the late receipt of the first instalment from the EU (29th November 2005).

3. What dates were payments requested and received?

After initial delay payment was requested on 6th October 2005 and first instalment in amount of € 32,151.60 was received on 29th November 2005.

B. Project Activities

PROJECT MID-TERM PERIOD – YEAR 1 (MAY 2005 – APRIL 2006)

PREPARATION ACTIVITY 1 –KICK-OFF MEETING (MAY 2005) AND PROJECT TEAM ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVITIES (MAY 2005 – APRIL 2006)

The Project started with **establishment of SUCCESS Project team**, as follows:

1. Project Manager (PM) – Mr. Ranko Tadic, residing in Omisalj, at beginning employee of Eko Liburnia in its branch office in Omisalj (from 1st May - 30th September 2005), while from 1st October 2005 part-time engaged on the Project for 20 working hours per week (contract between Eko Liburnia and his new employer - AgriBioCert Omisalj).

2. Project Manager Assistant 1 (PMA1), responsible for social aspects of the Aarhus Convention implementation – Mr. Andrija Vranic, residing in Zagreb, part-time engaged for 20 working hours per week through signed agreement and three contracts nos.: 01-05, 03-05 and 05-05.

3. Project Manager Assistant 2 (PMA2), responsible for legal aspects of the Aarhus Convention implementation – Ms. Sandra Bencic, residing in Zagreb, part-time engaged for 20 working hours per week .

4. Project Manager Assistant 3 (PMA3), responsible for economic aspects of the Aarhus Convention implementation – Ms. Kristina Badurina, residing in Rijeka, full-time employee of Eko Liburnia, engaged on the Project 20 working hours per week.

5. Project Administrator (PA), responsible for Project administration – Ms. Sanja Gasparac, residing in Rijeka, full-time employee of Eko Liburnia (business secretary), engaged on the Project 13,3 working hours per week.

The **KICK-OFF (first) MEETING** of the SUCCESS Project team was held in Eko Liburnia premises in Rijeka on 5th May 2005 with aim to clearly define duties and responsibilities of five members of the Project team. Present were PM, PMA1, PMA3 and PA. Unfortunately, Ms. Sandra Bencic (PMA2), originally foreseen member of the Project team, decided not to participate in its implementation due to other personal obligations. The conclusion of the meeting was that PMA1 and PMA2 will jointly look for another person who will serve as PMA2 on the Project.

Eko Liburnia has offered half-time employment to both PMA1 and PMA2 throughout duration of the Project which was refused by external collaborators who preferred to be engaged on a contract basis. Taking into account that Project team is decentralized (one member in Omisalj, two in Zagreb and two in Rijeka), it was decided that Project will acquire its own mobile phone system (four VIPnet phones) in order that members of the Project team may communicate among themselves without any charge (started from June 2005). Furthermore, since project was not providing any funds for overnight stays costs, PM offered to PMA1 and PMA2 free accommodation in his house whenever that is needed.

It took two months for PMA2 replacement, and subsequently **second Project team meeting** was held in Eko Liburnia branch office premises in Omisalj from 18th-19th July 2005. Present were PM, PMA1 and two PMA2 being Ms. Sandra Bencic and Mr. Stjepan Baric, residing in Zagreb, who replaced Sandra Bencic as PMA2(b) through signed agreement and contract no. 02-05.

During meeting main topics of all six Project bulletins titled SOVA (*the Owl*) were decided, as well as contents of its first issue. It was agreed that PMA2 and PMA3 are responsible for preparation of the “rough” contents of bulletins while PM is responsible for its finalization and editing. Furthermore, PMA3 and PA are responsible for preparation of printed and electronic versions of bulletins and their presentation and distribution to beneficiaries within the Primorsko-Goranska County and other parts of Croatia.

Taking into account that Eko Liburnia was waiting seven months for the first instalment from the EU, at the beginning of the Project (May-November 2005) it was possible to cover only following expenses: salaries of its three employees (PM, PMA3 and PA), office costs (telephone, electricity and heating, rent, water consumption and VIPnet mobile phones) and some stationary costs. Although external collaborators from Zagreb got guarantees from PM that their engagement (salary and travel costs) will be fully reimbursed after receiving money from the EU, beginning of September 2005 Stjepan Baric /PMA2(b)/ decided not to continue with collaboration, while Andrija Vranic (PMA1) decided to stay on the Project without performing any activities pending the first quarter payment.

Furthermore, Ranko Tadic (PM) had to leave Eko Liburnia as employee on 30th September 2005 and to get employment with AgriBioCert Omisalj due to legal requirements (head of organic inspection must be an employee). However, his engagement on the Project was fully agreed with his new employer by the contract.

In this situation **third Project team meeting** was held in Eko Liburnia premises in Rijeka on 26th September 2005. Present were: PM, PMA3 and PA. Present members of the Project team decided to continue work as envisaged in original Project proposal with or without two external assistants. For that matter Eko Liburnia included some of its members into project implementation, as follows:

- # Ms. Rada Uzelac Radovic. B.A. (law), private solicitor from Rijeka, providing free legal advices concerning first and third pillar of Aarhus Convention to all Project beneficiaries
- # Mr. Petar Vrgoc, Ph.D. (forestry), “Hrvatske sume” Co., providing free technical advices concerning biodiversity and soil issues;
- # Ms. Doris Sosic, B.A. (economy), providing free technical advices concerning relation between entrepreneurship and environment protection issues; and
- # Mr. Drazen Lusic, M.Sc. (sanitary engineering), Faculty of Medicine Rijeka, providing free technical advices concerning water and air pollution issues and consumers rights.



Another outcome of the third meeting was decision to organise official press conference with the aim to present activities of Eko Liburnia on implementation of four EU funded projects with special emphasis on SUCCESS. **Press conference** was held in Eko Liburnia premises in Rijeka on 6th October 2005 (photo above) attracting representatives of local TV (Ri kanal), radio (Radio Rijeka, SVID) and newspapers (Novi list, Vecernji list) – attachment 1.

First instalment from the EU was received on 29th November 2005 and initial financial difficulties were solved. Following the good news PMA1 informed PM that he has found new person who will replace Stjepan Baric as PMA2.

Fourth Project team meeting was held in Eko Liburnia premises in Rijeka on 22nd December 2005. Present were: PM, PMA1, PMA2(c), PMA3 and PA. Ms. Lana Ofak / PMA2(c)/, residing in Zagreb replaced Stjepan Baric as part-time staff (20 working hours per week) and engaged through agreement and contracts nos. 04-05 and 06-05 signed during the fourth meeting. During meeting contents of the second and third issue of bulletin SOVA were agreed, as well as the contents of the regional workshop on Aarhus Convention implementation scheduled for February 2006.

Mr. Andrija Vranic /PMA1/ and Ms. Lana Ofak / PMA2(c)/ started work on their agreed activities of the second Project quarter (planned for August-October 2005) with five-month delay end of December 2005. However, although Project did not have any financial difficulties anymore, Ms. Ofak resigned officially on 16th January 2006 due to severe health problems. For the third time in nine months Project was forced to look for the new assistant responsible for legal aspects of the Aarhus Convention implementation.

Finally, end of January 2006, recommended by the PMA1, fourth PMA2 was engaged. Tomislav Tomasevic /PMA2(d)/, residing in Zapresic, replaced Lana Ofak as the Project part-time staff (20 working hours per week), engaged through signed agreement and contracts nos. 04a-05 and 06a-05.

Fifth and sixth meetings of the Project team were held in connection with holding of the Project regional workshop (Rijeka, 23rd February 2006) and the second local workshop (Vrbnik, 11th April 2006).

Finishing its first year Project had successful **national presentation** at the “3rd Mediterranean Ecology Fair” in Dubrovnik (31st March – 2nd April 2006) where members of the Project team (PM, PMA3 and PA) had an ideal opportunity to promote Aarhus Convention and distribute SOVA bulletins to 200 exhibitors from all parts of Croatia and numerous Fair visitors (photo below).



To conclude, this activity started as planned but due to the constant change of one member of the Project team (PMA2) during the mid-term period, as well as to the initial financial difficulties (seven months delay of the first Project instalment by the EU), it was completed in February 2006 (10th project month), causing delay in implementation of some of the Project activities.

PREPARATION ACTIVITY 2 – CONTACT/INQUIRY IN 35 TOWNS/ MUNICIPALITIES FROM PGC (MAY 2005 – FEBRUARY 2006)

Aim of this activity was to inform representatives of all **35 towns/municipalities** within Primorsko-Goranska County (PGC) about the Project objectives, activities and expected results, as well as about their potential roles, benefits, duties and responsibilities within the Project. For the easier Project implementation town/municipalities were divided into 3 sub regions, as follows

Highlands: towns of Cabar, Delnice and Vrbovsko; and municipalities of Brod Moravice, Fuzine, Klana, Lokve, Mrkopalj, Ravna Gora and Skrad (subtotal of 9);

Littoral: towns of Bakar, Crikvenica, Kastav, Kraljevica, Novi Vinodolski, Opatija and Rijeka; and municipalities of Cavle, Jelenje, Kostrena, Lovran, Matulji, Moscenicka Draga, Vinodolska (Bribir) and Viskovo (subtotal of 16); and

Islands: towns of Cres, Krk, Mali Losinj and Rab; and municipalities of Baska, Dobrinj, Malinska-Dubasnica, Omisalj, Punat and Vrbnik (subtotal of 10).

Initial contacts with all town/municipalities representatives started in May 2005 by phone and through several individual visits (PM). However, due to the fact that **regional and local elections in Croatia** were held on **15th May 2005**, implementation of this activity was significantly postponed since establishment of new towns/municipalities` assemblies & governments went into and after summer holidays. Taking into account that Eko Liburnia received initial Project funds rather late, i.e. on 29th November 2005, serious implementation of this activity commenced in December 2005 and lasted until holding of the Project regional workshop on Aarhus Convention implementation in February 2006.

For the purpose of this activity Project team developed appropriate **questionnaire** (attachment 2) through which towns/municipalities were asked to inform about their general data as well as about their existing procedures of environmental planning and decision making (with or without respect to Aarhus Convention), as well as about their (non) existing development schemes, programmes and projects, including description of sustainable development stakeholders (NGOs, existing and potential enterprises, technical and scientific institutions, etc.).

Project questionnaire, together with official letter and brief information on the Project (attachment 3), were sent to all PGC towns/municipalities first in August 2005. However, due to the above mentioned holding and outcomes of the local elections, this activity was repeated in February 2006 in order to get precise answer from towns/municipalities.

It may be stated that in general towns/municipalities response to the SUCCESS project was rather weak due to the following facts:

- (i) towns/municipalities` representatives were completely unfamiliar about Aarhus Convention and its principles;
- (ii) since Croatia has not yet ratified the Convention towns/municipal officers have not seen any legal obligation to work on its local implementation - rather they have seen it as an unnecessary extra work; and
- (iii) only town of Rijeka had employees whose main duties and responsibilities were related to environmental issues.

From 35 contacted towns/municipalities only **eleven** gave the positive response stating that they are willing to participate in all or some of the Project activities, being: towns of Cabar, Delnice, Kraljevica and Rijeka, and municipalities of: Brod Moravice, Fuzine, Lokve, Lovran, Punat, Vinodolska and Vrbnik.

On the other hand, seven towns/municipalities stated that they have no interest in participating in the Project: municipalities of Jelenje, Malinska-Dubasnica, Matulji, Mrkopalj, Omisalj, Ravna Gora and Viskovo. Remaining 17 towns/municipalities neither stated interest nor lack of it.

To conclude, this activity was performed with significant delay - contacts with towns/municipalities lasted five months longer than planned due to the holding of local elections in May 2005 and its outcomes, as well as to summer holidays which followed immediately after forming of many of the new municipal governments. Moreover, activity has not resulted in expected satisfactory results concerning filling-in of questionnaires so it has to be continued during the second mid-term.

PREPARATION ACTIVITY 3 – PREPARATION OF THE PROJECT DATABASE (MAY – SEPTEMBER 2005)

In order to define which rural areas and municipalities of the PGC have real potential for implementation of the SUCCESS Project, Project team collected presently available and reliable data on Project area: population; level of economic development - data on present economic activities (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism, industry, SMEs, services); climate; use of land (agriculture, forestry, urban); natural resources with emphasis on protected areas, flora, fauna, endemic species; cultural heritage (protected sites); and existing and potential environmental hazards (air, water, soil).

Furthermore, during the first four months Project's assistants (PMA1 & PMA2) conducted the survey of the Aarhus Convention documents and referent EU regulation and directives, as well as of related national legislation. These surveys are to be published in Project bulletins and presented on the Project web site, informing target groups (local authorities, civil society members, business sector, citizens) on legal aspects of citizen participation in environmental matters.

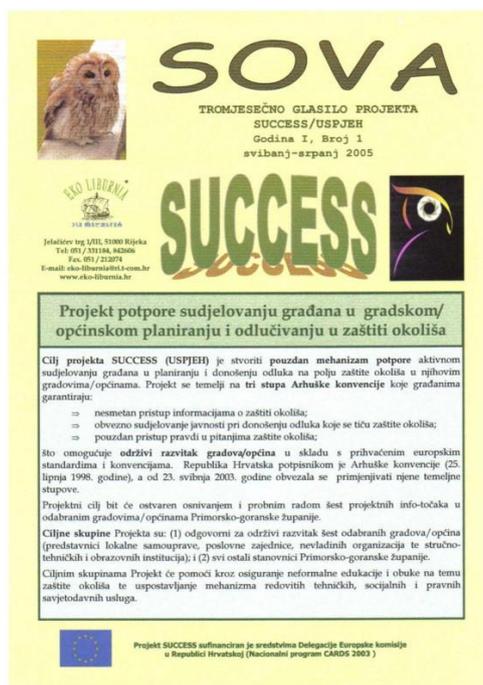
This activity was performed as planned. However, it is envisaged that database is regularly maintained throughout the Project life as continuous activity, including social and legal analysis of all collected documents.

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 1 – FIRST ISSUE OF THE SUCCESS BULLETIN “SOVA” (SEPTEMBER 2005) AND LAUNCHING OF THE PROJECT’S WEB SITE (FEBRUARY 2006)

Working materials for the **first issue** of the SUCCESS bulletin titled **SOVA** (*The Owl*) were prepared by PMA1, PMA2 and PMA2(b) during and following the second Project team meeting (18th-19th July 2005) and sent by e-mail to the Project office on 26th August 2005. Taking into account that materials received were rather “dry”, it took two weeks for PM to edit and complete final version in September 2005 (attachment 4). Printed and electronic copies of the first issue of bulletin were distributed within the Project area by PMA3 and PA as planned.

First issue of **SOVA** bulletin has 28 pages and contains articles on:

- # brief information on the SUCCESS project;
- # special topic no.1 - **Aarhus Convention presentation and survey**;
- # list of relevant authorities in Croatia concerning different aspects of environmental protection (water, waste, air, nature, etc.) including addresses in PGC;
- # list of international conventions and laws on environmental protection;
- # list of Croatian laws on environmental protection;
- # selection of press clips on present environmental problems in PGC; and
- # brief presentation of projects of Eko Liburnia from 2000-2005.



Pending receipt of the first instalment from the EU contract with the Project web-site subcontractor SAGITA Opatija was signed on 30th November 2005. Finally, before holding of the regional Project workshop, Project web-site was launched in February 2006.

PREPARATION ACTIVITY 4 – DEVELOPMENT OF THE AARHUS CONVENTION WORKSHOP CURRICULA (JANUARY 2006)

Based on data on environmental state-of-the-art in PGC and materials from the first SOVA bulletin, members of the Project team developed curricula for the Aarhus Convention workshops (regional and local) to be held during the 2nd Project semester.

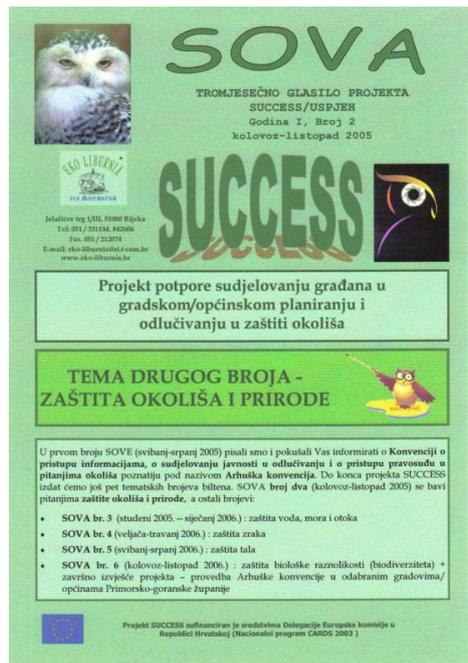
Activity was held with three-month delay due to the earlier mentioned reasons but provided planned and expected results - workshops' curricula developed (attachments 5).

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 2 – SECOND ISSUE OF THE SUCCESS BULLETIN “SOVA” (JANUARY 2006)

Working materials for the **second issue** of the SUCCESS bulletin **SOVA** were prepared by PMA1 and PMA2(c) during and following the fourth Project team meeting (22nd December 2005) and sent by e-mail to the Project office on 22nd January 2006. Final version was edited and completed by PM the same month. (attachment 6). Printed and electronic copies of the second issue of bulletin were distributed within the Project area by PMA3 and PA as planned and made available on Project web-site in March 2006.

Second issue of **SOVA** bulletin has 28 pages and contains articles on:

- # special topic no.2 - **protection of environment and nature;**
- # list of Croatian laws and development strategies on protection of environment and nature;
- # brief presentation of selected on-going projects on protection of environment and nature within PGC; and
- # brief presentation of activities on other projects of Eko Liburnia including on-going EU CARDS project REGINA.



Activity was held with three-months delay mostly due to the second change of Project team member responsible for legal aspects of the Aarhus Convention implementation, but provided expected results (both hard and electronic copies produced, distributed, and made available on Project web-site for free downloading).

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 3 – SELECTION OF TOWNS/MUNICIPALITIES (FEBRUARY 2006)

Based on response from 35 inquired towns/municipalities and according to the own criteria (based on principles of the Aarhus Convention), Project team was to select six municipalities with which SUCCESS will sign long-term protocols of cooperation, i.e. in which further Project activities will be implemented (two municipalities per sub region). Due to delays in contacts with towns/municipalities caused by local elections in May 2005 and its outcomes, this activity was postponed from October 2005 to February 2006.

Taking into account that towns/municipalities response to the Project was rather weak (positive response from eleven only) Project team decided not to close the door to any town/municipality willing to participate in the Project and to narrow the selection to six during the second Project year.

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 4 – HOLDING OF THE GENERAL AARHUS CONVENTION WORKSHOP (FEBRUARY 2006)

General Aarhus Convention workshop was aimed to present: (i) Aarhus Convention and its implementation examples, (ii) EU and domestic legislation, and (iii) practical forms of its local implementation to representatives of Project area towns/ municipalities.

On 13th February 2006 Eko Liburnia sent workshop invitations (attachments 7.1-7.12) to:

- # European Commission, Delegation to the Republic of Croatia (main Project sponsor);
- # representatives of all Croatian ministries relevant to Project implementation: Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Ministry of Culture, Department for Protection of Nature; Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development; Ministry of Justice; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration;
- # Head of Primorsko-Goranska County;
- # Town of Rijeka, Department of Development, Ecology and Physical Planning (Project sponsor);

representatives of all 35 Project area towns/municipalities;
 # Regional development Agency PORIN (Eko Liburnia partner on implementation of EU CARDS project REGINA); and
 # media.

Regional workshop was held in town of Rijeka Assembly Hall on 23rd February 2006 with the following agenda:

10:15 – 10:30	Registration of participants
10:30 – 10:50	Presentation of the SUCCESS project
10:50 – 11:05	Public participation in decision-making
11:05 – 11:15	Introduction to Aarhus Convention (AC)
11:15 – 11:25	First pillar of the AC – Access to information on environmental protection
11:25 – 11:35	Croatian legislature related to the first pillar of the AC
11:35 – 11:45	Second pillar of the AC - Public participation in decision-making
11:45 – 11:55	Croatian legislature related to the second pillar of the AC
11:55 – 12:05	Third pillar of the AC – Access to justice in environmental matters
12:05 – 12:15	Croatian legislature related to the third pillar of the AC
12:15 – 12:20	Division of participants in two working groups
12:20 – 12:40	<i>Coffee-break</i>
12:40 – 13:25	Work in working groups
13:25 – 13:55	Presentation of working groups' conclusions (10 minutes each)
13:55 – 14:15	Next steps and workshop conclusions

Regional workshop was held by PM, PMA1 and PMA2(d) and consisted of three sessions based on previously prepared curricula (see preparation activity 4):

1st session - introduction to Aarhus Convention, its three pillars and Croatian legislature related to it.

2nd session – work in two working groups based on following questions: (i) experience on previous contacts with citizens related to environmental protection issues; (ii) possible challenges in Aarhus Convention implementation on town/municipality level, and (iii) environmental protection key-issues to be emphasised by the SUCCESS project.

3rd session – presentation of working groups' conclusions and workshop wrap-up session.

Workshop attendance was rather unsatisfactory – it was attended by five members of the Project team and 15 participants only - representatives of the: (a) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (1); (b) Primorsko-Goranska County, Institute for Physical Planning and Sustainable Development (1); (c) Regional development Agency PORIN (2); and (d) towns of Cabar (1), Kraljevica (1), Novi Vinodolski (2) and Rijeka (2) & municipalities of Fuzine (1), Punat (2), Vrbnik (1) and Vinodolska-Bribir (1) – attachment 7.30.

Workshop was good opportunity to organize **second Project press conference**, attended by representatives of local TVs (Ri kanal, RiTV), radio (Radio Rijeka) and newspapers (Novi list, Vecernji list) – attachment 8.

Since SUCCESS project does not have any funds provided for hosting of workshops, this one was hosted by the Town of Rijeka (venue & refreshments).



To conclude, activity was held with three months delay due to the previously stated reasons. It provided expected results but without satisfactory attendance from both relevant ministries and Project area towns/municipalities being one of the main project beneficiaries. It is obvious that Aarhus Convention and its implementation on all levels of the Croatian governance (national, regional and local) is not too high on the agenda mostly due to the fact that Convention is not still ratified by the Croatian parliament.

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 5 – HOLDING OF LOCAL AARHUS CONVENTION WORKSHOPS IN SELECTED PROJECT TOWNS/MUNICIPALITIES (MARCH-APRIL 2006)

After holding of general workshop representing introduction of the basic legal and practical aspects of the Aarhus Convention implementation, Project envisaged holding of six local workshops in selected towns/municipalities. These local trainings are focused on more practical implications of Aarhus Convention implementation. Three pillars of the Convention are presented to local sustainable development stake-holders (representatives of all target groups being local authorities, civil society members and business sector), after which Aarhus Convention implementation on local level is defined. Also, each town/municipality should choose one (the most important) environmental issue/problem through which Convention implementation (especially on public participation in resolving the problem) will be tested.

Since general workshop was postponed from November 2005 to February 2006, this activity commenced in March 2006. During first Project year two local workshops were held – one in Fuzine municipality (Highlands subregion) on 21st March 2006, and another in Vrbnik municipality (Islands subregion) on 11th April 2006, while remaining four workshops were shifted into the second Project year. Reasons for such decision were:

(i) During period from February – May 2006 three members of the Project team (PM, PMA3 and PA) were actively participating in organizing and holding of **ten EU CARDS REGINA project local workshops**, as follows: Vinodolska (Bribir) municipality on 24th February; Moscenicka Draga municipality on 6th March; Fuzine municipality on 15th March; Mrkopalj municipality on 18th March; Lovran municipality on 11th April; Krk township on 19th April; Vrbnik municipality on 20th April; Novi Vinodolski township on 25th April; Mali Losinj township on 10th May; and Rab township on 15th May.

(ii) Although engaged on the Project half of the working time, Project external collaborators (PMA1 and PMA2) informed PM and the Project office that in a period from February -April 2006, due to other obligations, they will be available for holding of SUCCESS local workshops only 18 out of 89 days.

In such a situation it was not possible to hold more than two workshops in these two months. However, Project team used ten REGINA workshops to inform citizens of Project area about

both SUCCESS project and Aarhus Convention, as well as to directly distribute printed copies of SOVA bulletins.

Two workshops were held as follows:

Workshop in Fuzine was agreed during meeting between PM and mayor of Fuzine on 27th October 2005. After holding of general workshop in Rijeka, workshop in Fuzine was held as the first local one on 21st March 2006 (attachments 9). It took place in Fuzine Municipality premises and was attended by five members of the Project team and nine local participants, being four representatives of municipal government; two representatives of “Croatian Forests” company; one primary school representative and two students. Workshop resulted in Fuzine municipality Aarhus Convention action plan to be implemented by the end of 2006 with the assistance from the Project team.

Workshop was hosted by Fuzine Municipality (venue & refreshments), while Project stakeholder AgriBioCert Omisalj paid lunch for all workshop participants (contribution of 2.006,50 HRK to the Project).



Workshop in Vrbnik was agreed during meeting between PM and mayor of Vrbnik on 7th April 2006. Vrbnik workshop (photo above) was held on 11th April 2006 in Vrbnik municipality premises (attachments 10). It was attended by four members of the Project team (PM, PMA1, PMA2 and PA) and three local participants, being one representative of municipal government; one representative of agricultural cooperative “Vrbnik”; and one citizens` representative. Workshop resulted in Vrbnik municipality Aarhus Convention action plan to be implemented by the end of 2006 with the assistance from the Project team.

Workshop was hosted by Vrbnik Municipality (venue & refreshments), while AgriBioCert Omisalj again paid lunch for all workshop participants (contribution of 985,00 HRK to the Project).

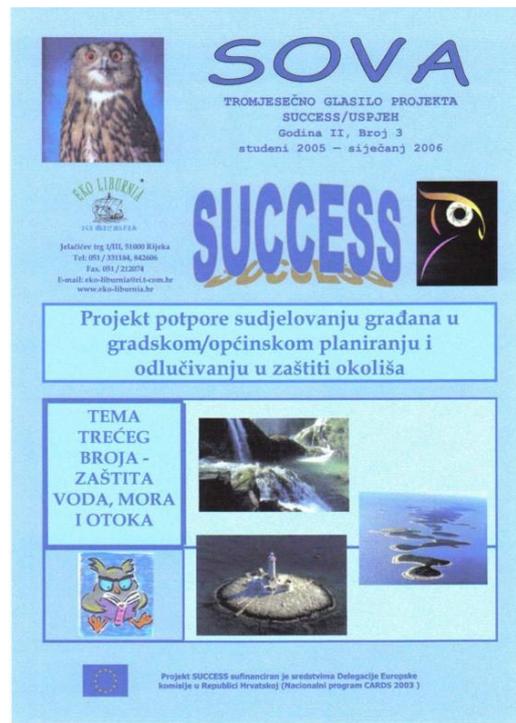
EXECUTION ACTIVITY 6 – THIRD ISSUE OF THE SUCCESS BULLETIN “SOVA” (APRIL 2006)

Working materials for the **third issue** of the SUCCESS bulletin **SOVA** were prepared by PMA1 and PMA2(c) and sent by e-mail to the Project office on 4th April 2006. Final version was edited and completed by PM the same month. (attachment 11). Printed and electronic copies of the third issue of bulletin were distributed within the Project area by PMA3 and PA as planned and made available on Project web-site in April 2006.

Third issue of **SOVA** bulletin has 32 pages and contains articles on:

- # special topic no.3 - **protection of water, sea and islands;**
- # list of water resources in PGC;
- # list of Croatian laws and strategies on protection of water, sea and islands;
- # brief presentation of selected on-going projects on protection of water, sea and islands in Croatia; and

brief presentation of activities on other projects of Eko Liburnia including on-going EU CARDS project REGINA.



Activity was held with three-month delay, but provided expected results (both hard and electronic copies produced, distributed, and made available on Project web-site for free downloading).

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 7 – FOURTH ISSUE OF THE SUCCESS BULLETIN “SOVA”

Since working materials for the **fourth issue** of the SUCCESS bulletin **SOVA** were not prepared by PMA1 and PMA2(c) by the end of April 2006, this activity was postponed for the second project year.

EXECUTION ACTIVITY 8 – SECOND EVALUATION & SELECTION OF PROJECT INFO-POINTS (APRIL 2006)

This activity represents final activity of the first Project year. It was envisaged that, based on findings and results of the general and local workshops, Project team will select six Project info-points for the last phase of the Project, as well as for the Project follow up.

Contacts with Project area towns/municipalities have shown that neither one of them is interested in establishment of SUCCESS info-point since selection criteria was based on town/municipality willingness to provide premises and utilities for the info-point, as well as the adequate person for the info-point co-ordinator job. Furthermore, SUCCESS project in its budget does not envisage any info-points operation financial back-up.

At the same time, six similar info-points are to be established beginning of 2007 as part of the complementary REGINA project implementation. Towns/municipalities` arguments were that it would be too much to establish additional six SUCCESS info-points, especially taking into account that Eko Liburnia is implementing both projects.

In approved SUCCESS project proposal it was clearly stated that SUCCESS is directly linked to the complementary project »REGINA - Introduction and Implementation of the Sustainable Regional Rural Development Model Based on Certified "Green" Entrepreneurship« in which

Eko Liburnia is partner to the Regional Development Agency PORIN. It was also expected that REGINA implementation will start six months before the SUCCESS one (in December 2004), which did not happen due to the rather peculiar administrative reasons (contractual change of PORIN from entrepreneurial incubator into regional development agency) and REGINA commenced just one month before SUCCESS – in April 2005.

Taking all the above mentioned into consideration and after consultation with REGINA project partner PORIN, Eko Liburnia had to accept quite reasonable arguments of towns/municipalities. Therefore, it was decided that SUCCESS and REGINA info-points will be merged providing two different kinds of services to beneficiaries using the same info-points. This decision, however, means that implementation of SUCCESS project must be prolonged from seven-eight months pending establishment of REGINA info-points in 2007.

To conclude, this activity was held as planned but it did not provide expected results, i.e. decision on selection of info-points had to be postponed into second Project year and depending on REGINA project outcomes.

2. Please list all materials and publications produced during the project (please enclose a copy of each item).

First issue of the SUCCESS bulletin “SOVA” (topic: Aarhus Convention) - attachment 4

Aarhus Convention workshops' curricula - attachments 5

Second issue of the SUCCESS bulletin “SOVA” (topic: protection of environment and nature) - attachment 6

Third issue of the SUCCESS bulletin “SOVA” (topic: protection of water, sea and islands) – attachment 11

3. Please outline any contracted activities and publications that have not taken place and any other changes to the foreseen activities or timetable, explaining the reasons for these.

Most of the contracted activities and publications took place during the first Project year with the exception of holding of four local workshops and preparation of the fourth issue of the SUCCESS bulletin “SOVA” to be implemented in the second Project year.

4. What problems have arisen and how have these been addressed?

Perhaps due to its title, SUCCESS project has experienced several misfortunes and problems during the first year of its implementation, as follows:

1. Change of the most towns/municipalities' governments due to results of regional and local elections in Croatia held on 15th May 2005, i.e. at the very beginning of the Project. For that matter Project had to promote its goals, mission and activities more than once. This problem was addressed with a lot of patience – Project team had to wait a couple of months before starting with implementation of some of its activities.

2. Late receipt of the first instalment of EU funds. Although Project commenced with its activities on 1st May 2005 first instalment was received seven months later – on 29th November 2005. However, from its own funds Eko Liburnia was able to carry some of the Project activities during that time (contact with towns/municipalities, database preparation, preparation of the first issue of SOVA bulletin, dissemination of environmental information to citizens).

3. Constant change of one member of the Project team - during the first year four persons were serving as the Project Manager Assistant 2 responsible for legal aspects of the Aarhus

Convention implementation. This problem was finally solved in January 2006 but created a lot of set-backs.

4. Last but not the least, main problem was unexpectedly low interest of Project region towns/municipalities in Project implementation, especially in its co-financing with exception of the Town of Rijeka. This problem was addressed by Project team decision not to close the door to any town/municipality willing to participate in the Project and to narrow the selection during the second Project year.

Secondly, contacts with towns/municipalities have shown that neither one of them is interested in establishment of SUCCESS info-point since selection criteria was based on town/municipality willingness to provide premises and utilities for the info-point, as well as the adequate person for the info-point co-ordinator job without any financial back-up from the Project. This problem was solved after consultation with REGINA project partner PORIN. It was decided that SUCCESS and REGINA info-points will be merged providing two different kinds of services to beneficiaries using the same premises and staff. This decision, however, means that implementation of SUCCESS project must be prolonged for seven-eight months more pending establishment of REGINA info-points in 2007.

C. Impact and Evaluation

1. What is your assessment of the results of the project? Include observations on the extent to which foreseen goals were met and whether the project has had any unforeseen positive or negative results.

Overall objective of the SUCCESS project is to promote and improve environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources on the local level through establishment of the sound partnership process between municipal governance and the general public based on the three pillars of the UN/ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, known as the Aarhus Convention.

Specific objective of SUCCESS project is to establish a mechanism for public participation in planning and decision making on environmental management issues in six selected municipalities of Primorsko-Goranska County (CPG) through:

- # Regular dissemination of environmental information to the general public (web site, bulletins);
- # Integration of Aarhus Convention principles in formal local environmental decision making processes; and
- # Monitoring on public participation processes and provision of legal advice to public stakeholders interested in environmental issues organised by the project.

In justification of the SUCCESS project it was stated that it is a small project designed to start positive change of practice towards environmental planning and decision-making on a local/municipal level. Its mission is to convince citizens that change is possible concerning relation between national and local governments concerning development priorities. After all, anywhere in the world local population protects the environment the best and manage its natural resources in the most sustainable way. If SUCCESS proves a success its implementation will influence other municipalities from other Croatian counties to follow this example. And that is to start to request fulfilment of their two basic democratic rights: right to know and right to justice.

During the first year Project succeeded to commence with a process of practical implementation of the Aarhus Convention principles through regular dissemination of environmental information to the general public (web site, SOVA bulletins, and workshops).

On the other hand, although Project team was aware of the fact that Aarhus Convention and sustainable development principles are almost unknown within the Project region, it did not expect that such an important issue will attract such a little interest from regional and municipal governments. To compare, promotion and development of “green” entrepreneurship, performed by the complementary REGINA project in which Eko Liburnia is partner to the Regional Development Agency PORIN, attracted better interest from both sustainable development stakeholders and the general public.

To conclude, SUCCESS started with a process of reaching of its foreseen goals but it is obvious that these goals will be fully met after 18 initial SUCCESS project months are passed. Taking that as a challenge, Eko Liburnia decided to continue with SUCCESS activities after Project is officially terminated.

2. In the light of experience gained, please describe what has been both positive and negative in the implementation and management of the project.

Positive in implementation of the Project was the fact that information on Aarhus Convention, still not ratified by the Croatian Parliament, finally found its way to at least some sustainable development stakeholders on county and municipal levels, as well as to the general public. Moreover, in two municipalities action plan on local Aarhus Convention implementation has been developed and started.

Negative in Project implementation was too strong influence of political elections (stopping every development project for half a year), and very poor technical and management capacities of the towns/municipalities' governments, resulting in slow response to implementation of some Project activities (for example, filling-in of the Project questionnaire, organisation of workshops). Very negative was also late receipt of the first instalment of the Project funds since “*money makes the world go round*”.

Positive in Project management was engagement of external collaborators outside the Project region (which was not the practice of Eko Liburnia in the past) in a view of exchanging of ideas and experiences. At the same time that also proved very negative, since Project has experienced constant change of external staff and received too little real commitment from them (“*Lontano dagli occhi, lontano dal cuore*”).

3. What has been the impact on both the target group and the target region?

SUCCESS project has two principal target groups:

environmental planning and decision making stakeholders in selected municipalities of the PGC (representatives of local government, business community, NGOs), and

local population who will through the Project activities, mostly through six info-points, get their sound access to information and justice in environmental matters.

In project proposal it was stated that technical and management capacities of target groups, being stakeholders in environmental planning and decision making in towns/municipalities, with exception of the big town like Rijeka and possibly some of the other eight pre-1990s seats of the larger municipalities, is rather weak.

After one-year of SUCCESS project implementation it can be stated that mayor impact is beginning of the process of changing of initial unfavourable situation of its target groups:

Aarhus Convention and sustainable development principles are now better known within the Project region;

knowledge on economic value of the clean environment starts to exist in the region; and.

stronger public participation in development decisions in project towns/municipalities is expected in the near future.

Although technical and management capacities of target groups are still rather weak, mostly due to the fact that within the Project region only Town of Rijeka is employing professionals to work on environmental issues, it can be stated that Project has succeeded in improving of these capacities through the regular dissemination of environmental information (web site, workshops, bulletins).

Concerning citizens SUCCESS is slowly improving their capacities and negative way of thinking (“nothing can be done”).

4. How and by whom have the activities been monitored/evaluated? Please summarise the results of the feedback received.

All SUCCESS activities are easily measurable, therefore it is not difficult to evaluate them both internally and externally. After every semester Project team had its periodic internal evaluation resulting in concrete actions.

External evaluation is done by project beneficiaries themselves:

- # towns/municipalities organising local Aarhus Convention implementation workshops;
- # workshops` participants collaborating with a Project team in preparation and implementation of local Aarhus Convention action plans;
- # readers of SOVA bulletins;
- # visitors of the Project web site; and
- # citizens contacting the Project office asking for information and assistance.

5. What impact has the project had on your organisation (and on your partners, if applicable)?

For many years Eko Liburnia was mostly involved in sustainable development projects with emphasis on promotion of environmentally-friendly economic activities such as organic agriculture and food production, ecotourism, other forms of certified “green” entrepreneurship and renewable energy sources. With SUCCESS Eko Liburnia has opened a new challenging frontier dealing with legal issues of environmental protection for the first time.

Moreover, with SOVA bulletin Eko Liburnia started with regular publishing activities and decided to keep it after termination of the Project.

D. Partners and other Co-operation (If applicable)

Each partner organisation should write a one-page assessment on its role and co-operation in the project.

1. How do you assess the relationship between the partners of this project? Give details about the division of responsibilities, transfer of expertise, and overall co-ordination of the partnership(s).

Eko Liburnia is implementing SUCCESS project without official partners. However, due to the fact that at the same time (April 2005 – March 2007) it was implementing complementary EU CARDS project REGINA with RDA PORIN Ltd. as lead partner, some kind of unofficial partnership on SUCCESS exists. Three members of the SUCCESS project team (PM, PMA3 and PA) are members of the REGINA project team as well. For that matter REGINA local workshops were used to inform citizens of Project area about both SUCCESS project and Aarhus Convention, as well as to directly distribute printed copies of SOVA bulletins.

Eko Liburnia also cooperates on SUCCESS implementation with AGRIBIOCERT Omisalj, REGINA project stakeholder for Islands sub region. AGRIBIOCERT allowed PM as its employee to participate in the Project and hosted two lunches for SUCCESS workshops participants in Fuzine and Vrbnik with its own funds (2.991,50 HRK in total).

2. Is the partnership to continue? If so, how? If not, why?

SUCCESS and REGINA projects` established partnership will continue through regular operation of six REGINA info-points after both projects officially terminate, as well as through envisaged cooperation on new similar projects.

3. How would you assess the relationship between your organisation and state authorities in the project countries? How has this relationship affected the project?

During the first year Eko Liburnia was not able to establish satisfactory relationship with state authorities on SUCCESS project implementation. For example, for regional workshop held in Rijeka in February 2006 Project invited representatives of all Croatian ministries relevant to Project implementation: Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MEPP); Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM); Ministry of Culture, Department for Protection of Nature (MC-DPN); Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development (MSTTD); Ministry of Justice (MJ); and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI). At the end only representative of MFAEI participated.

Since involvement of state authorities is rather important for project follow-up, Eko Liburnia will try to establish better relations in the second Project year.

E. Other

1. Visibility: how was the visibility of the EU contribution ensured in the project?

In all oral and written Project presentations and documents, including every single page of SOVA bulletins and workshops proceedings, EU significant contribution to the Project was regularly stated, which can be clearly seen from the attachments to this report.

Furthermore, Project had successful national presentation during the “3rd Mediterranean Ecology Fair” in Dubrovnik (31st March – 2nd April 2006), where members of the Project team promoted both the Project and the Aarhus Convention and distributed SOVA bulletins to exhibitors and visitors from all parts of Croatia.

2. Did the grant help secure new sources of funding for the project? Please give details.

Town of Rijeka, Department for Development, Urbanism and Environment, co-financed the Project in September 2005 in amount of 15,000.00 HRK (€ 2,023.47 according to EC monthly Euro exchange rate), representing 4.5 % of the total project funds (contract attached as attachment 12 to this report).

In 2006 Project will acquire remaining 5.5 % of the total project funds from other sources (governmental and/or private).

3. Viability: will the work carried out in this project continue after the support from the European Commission has ended? Please give details.

Work carried out in SUCCESS project will continue after the support from the European Commission has ended through:

(i) continuation of activities on Aarhus Convention implementation in Primorsko-Goranska County through regular dissemination of information to towns/municipalities and citizens by its head office in Rijeka (phone, e-mail, web site, SOVA bulletins);

(ii) regular operation of six info-points created by the complementary REGINA project in different parts of Primorsko-Goranska County (two in littoral, two in highlands and two on islands) from 2007. It is agreed that Eko Liburnia will assist in smooth start-up of these info-points in collaboration with RDA PORIN and local governments of six selected towns/municipalities.

(iii) commencement of SUCCESS daughter projects carried by Eko Liburnia in 2007.

4. What changes, if any, would you like to see in the management of the EIDHR?

Project partners are fully satisfied with the management of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and see no changes.

5 Please add any further information that would help the Commission to make a balanced evaluation of the project.

SUCCESS project is the first project of this kind to be implemented by Eko Liburnia. At the same time it is the first project ever on Aarhus Convention principles implementation within Primorsko-Goranska County. Since Project stakeholders and target groups were not too familiar with Project topics at the beginning, we feel that Commission should take these facts into consideration in order to evaluate Project implementation and outcomes objectively.

Date: ...11/05/2007..... Location:Rijeka.....

Name of the person responsible for the project:Ranko Tadic.....

Signature:

Name of the legal representative of the contractor:Ranko Tadic.....

Signature: